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Mount Everest: Discussion

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beautiful and suitable name were ever changed, even although it is actually the name of a late and honoured Surveyor-General and not a native name. At the same time there is no harm in speculating on what the native name may be. It is doubtful if the actual peak has one at all. Colonel Wood has clearly shown that the name Gaurisankar belongs to another group, and there are no backers for Brian Hodgson's Deva Dhunga.

It is not true, though, that natives of Nepal have no names for single peaks, for any Gurkhas from Central Nepal are familiar with the names of Macchha Puchri, Dhaulasiri—or Giri, Chibchibia, and Gosainthan, and others. My Sher Pas from the Dudkosi, whenever I have questioned them, gave the name Chomolungmo for the Everest group: I thought at first for the actual peak, but I think now for the group. They also, and unshakably, called Makalu "Kamalung," except Darjeeling men, who knew Englishmen used the former name for the mountain. In fact, I have never discovered any one else who knew the name of Makulu. Mr. Freshfield quotes the name Chomo Kankar, probably also for the group, and there is no reason that shouldn't be right. His authorities were Colonel Waddell and Chandra Das. Major Noel also obtained what he believed was a local name, probably also quite correct. He obtained this on his journey in 1914 to find a short and direct approach to Everest from the east and south-east *viâ* Tashirak, an exceedingly ambitious project. It was a real bit of exploration, and I believe he traversed country not before crossed by an Englishman, and of intense interest.

There is a river in Nepal, one of the affluents of the Trissul, which I called the Dharmdi. I was told I was wrong, and that its name was the Dharmkhola. Di is the Maggar word for river, and Khola the Nepali. I give this instance to show how very easy it is to confuse local names.

Even if this proposed expedition finds its real name written clearly on the mountain, I hope it will take no notice, as I am sure you will agree that no name is so beautiful and suitable as Mount Everest. May the 2 feet never be cut off its 29,002! Luckily the loss is now rendered more difficult, as the latest computation credits the mountain with 140 more.

One final word. I am sure that whoever takes part in this proposed exploration will join with me in regretting that the late General Rawling does not form one of the party, for I believe it was his life-long ambition, and that in all probability if he had lived he would have been himself one of the actual leaders.

Before the paper the PRESIDENT said: In my Presidential Address this year I stated that the Alpine Club and our Society were interesting themselves in plans for the ascent of Mount Everest. Since then the Secretary of State for India has been good enough to receive a deputation from our two Societies

and to express his sympathy with the project. Colonel Howard Bury then on our behalf—though we acknowledge with gratitude at his own expense—visited India to explain our wishes to the Government. He was cordially received by the Viceroy, who recommended him to visit Sikkim and talk the matter over with the local officer. Unfortunately it has been decided that for political reasons the present is not a propitious moment for actually commencing operations. But in the meanwhile till the political horizon clears we may well occupy ourselves in reviewing the whole project, for it will never be eventually successful unless it is planned out with particular attention beforehand. Utmost care in detail must go hand-in-hand with boldness, and the ascent of Mount Everest, one will realize, requires boldness in the extreme.

First let me say a few words about the general idea of climbing Mount Everest, for I want to get the idea enshrined in the very heart of this Society. I have never myself been a peak climber or acquired the art of Alpine climbing, but I have had ample evidence of the practical value of mountain climbing. When exploring a new route across the Himalaya in 1887, I came to the Mustagh Pass. What carried me over was the remembrance of the deeds and example of Alpine climbers. As I looked down the awful precipice I had to descend, I confess I felt terror, and if I had lived a hundred years ago I should not have dreamed for a moment of attempting the passage. I should have assumed as a matter of course that it was impossible, but with the recollection of what Alpine climbers had done in Switzerland, and what sportsmen do in India, I pulled myself together, took the plunge, and got over all right. And having, through the example of the Alpine Club, successfully negotiated the Mustagh Pass, I was able in subsequent years to tackle many other unknown passes in the Himalaya. And having become accustomed to Himalayan passes, I did not hesitate to advise the crossing of the Himalaya even in the depth of winter when I was leading a mission to Tibet in 1904.

The high spirit of the Alpine Club thus percolates downwards till it reaches us lowly geographers, soldiers, and political officers, braces us up, and enables us to carry out enterprises we should, but for their example, never have attempted. The ascent of Mount Everest will have the same effect to an increased degree. Our forefathers were terrified of mountains, and called the most ordinary peak inaccessible. Nowadays we refuse to admit that the highest mountain in the world cannot be scaled, and the man who first stands on the summit of Mount Everest will have raised the spirit of countless others for generations to come, and given men a firmer nerve for scaling every other mountain.

A further good result will follow. The ascent of Mount Everest will be preceded and followed by ascents of numerous other Himalayan peaks, and as we pit ourselves against them, we shall get to know them better, and as we get to know and understand them, we shall finally rid ourselves of the ridiculous idea of the littleness of man in comparison with mountains. We shall realize that man is incomparably greater than any mountain, but at the same time we shall see a beauty in these mountains which only those who have wrestled with them ever see. The beauty of the Alps was never properly appreciated until men climbed them, and it will be the same with the Himalaya : as we climb the Himalayan peaks and get to know them properly, we shall begin to enjoy their beauty, and the enjoyment of their beauty is the second result, and one of inestimable value, which will follow from the ascent of their highest summit. I have said that the first man to ascend Mount Everest will raise the spirit of countless others. Much also to raise it was done by the first man bold enough to conceive the idea. That

man—as I told the Society three years ago—is General Bruce. General Bruce has climbed in the Himalaya for nearly thirty years, and is known from one end of these mountains to the other. What is more, he is known not only as a great climber, but also as a great companion ; in any party he joins he is the most loyal member of it. A further recommendation to us is that he is a son of one of our most distinguished Presidents, the first Lord Aberdare. On all these accounts we welcome him most warmly among us.

General Bruce then read the paper printed above, and a discussion followed.

The PRESIDENT: We are fortunate in having the Alpine Club well represented here this evening, by its President, Prof. Norman Collie, and two ex-Presidents, Mr. Freshfield and Sir Martin Conway. I call upon the President of the Alpine Club, who was one of Mummery's party to make the attempt on Nanga Parbat, and who can appreciate what mountain climbing in the Himalayas means.

Prof. NORMAN COLLIE (President of the Alpine Club): As you have heard, this expedition to Everest is to be a joint expedition of the Geographical Society and of the Alpine Club. Two things of course naturally have to be determined about Everest. Firstly, it is of the very greatest importance that we should know something more about that part of the world out of which springs this very highest spot on the globe, Mount Everest. At present we know practically nothing. No white man has ever been within 40 or 50 miles of Everest, and all the country round it is unknown. Secondly, people can be sent who are capable of showing how it will be possible to get to the top of this mountain. Naturally, I think it is a great prize for the Geographical Society to have almost within their grasp, this most interesting part of the world as yet unknown and unexplored, and I wish it was as easy for the Alpine Club to say that the winning to the top of Everest was as easy. It will need an immense amount of work, an immense amount of labour, and it will be a most difficult thing indeed to climb to this highest point in the world's surface. The President and the Geographical Society have taken a very great deal of trouble in order to make this expedition successful, and I certainly hope it will be started next summer. The first expedition will necessarily not have much to do with the climbing of Everest. The way there will first have to be found ; then, having got to the bottom of the mountain, a possible route up to the peak might be suggested. This will take quite the whole of the time of the first year's expedition. In the second year's expedition there will have to be a properly equipped climbing party. They will probably find that the suggested route may not be successful, and may have to change it ; that will mean that they will not have time to change their route in one year, but will have to come back another year, and therefore it is not one expedition, but many, which will have to go to Everest before anybody is likely to set foot on the top. One other thing : most certainly if any expedition is allowed to go into this unknown and forbidden land round Everest, the expedition ought to be a British expedition ; under no conditions whatever should the British Government allow other people to go there before us. After having waited so long for leave to approach Everest, I think we really have prior claim to any one else to go into that country. Moreover—and now I speak from the Alpine Club standpoint—it is the Alpine Club which has taught the way to climb mountains. Every other Alpine Club in the world, and most of the climbers of mountains, have been followers of the first members of the Alpine Club. It was the members of the Alpine Club that

first began serious climbing in the Alps, although De Saussure first went up Mont Blanc, and it was fifty years almost after that before any other big mountain was ascended, and even then no one really took up climbing as a serious recreation. The members of the Alpine Club first made climbing in the mountains a successful venture, and therefore I think under those conditions it ought to be not only English people, but members of the Alpine Club, who must have the first say in the matter of climbing Everest, the highest mountain in the world.

The PRESIDENT: I will ask Mr. Douglas Freshfield, who made that wonderful climb round Kangchenjunga some years ago, if he would address the meeting.

Mr. DOUGLAS FRESHFIELD: It is a great pleasure to me to see an expedition to climb the highest mountain in the world, which I have dreamed of for at least fifty years, carried into effect. I had hoped, but for the unfortunate interruption by the war of all our normal activities, that it might have happened during my own Presidency, but it is now a consolation to me to find it undertaken by a President who can bring more influence than I could bring to bear to overcome the initial difficulties—the official obstacles. I hope most heartily it may be during our present President's term of office that the summit of Everest is reached. I will condense what I have to say as far as possible. First as to season and weather. The shortness of the interval between the end of the monsoon and the first heavy snowfall is a very serious hindrance to mountaineering, at any rate in the Eastern Himalaya. Is it possible that in the early summer, before the monsoon, the ice and snow might be found in better condition? Again, it is doubtless true that on the north side of the range there is far less mist and snow than on the southern slopes; but Tibet is far from immune from summer snowfalls. The great storm of September 1899 covered the whole district north of Kangchenjunga about a yard deep in snow and put a stop to any high climbing—nearly put a stop to all exploration; and this year Mr. Raeburn, a noted climber who went out to Kangchenjunga, has, I hear, been similarly hindered. As to the effects of altitude up to 21,000 feet: few members of my party were seriously affected. I myself at the age of fifty-five experienced no more than a sensation of lassitude, just as if I had taken up a heavy knapsack. Dieting is very important. Improper food was one of the principal causes of the great suffering in the High Alps amongst the early pioneers—sufferings we hardly ever hear of to-day.

As to transport, my experience may be to the point. Our party carried the baggage of over fifty men, including provisions for a fortnight in advance, and heavy photographic apparatus over a pass of 21,000 feet, in the worst conditions, after a heavy snowfall which had spread from 2 to 3 feet of soft snow over the whole range. With all that General Bruce has said with regard to coolies I agree, but they have one regrettable failing: they hate getting up early in the morning, and are eager to have a hot breakfast before they start. The consequence is they often have to wade in snow which would have been hard a few hours earlier.

My next point is local topography; the nature of the approaches to Mount Everest. In the Eastern Himalaya on the southern slope you come to a point where glacial protection has ceased and erosive action by water and ice has had full play. In the Teesta valley this point is well marked; below it the river flows in a deep gorge, higher up through an open valley. There is probably a similar point in the Arun basin. Its situation should be easily ascertainable by aeroplane. Machines could fly up from the plains of India and back

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again in the day : they might also be used for telephotographic purposes, and even possibly for dropping provisions at high bivouacs. As to the character of the climbing on the great peak, I have seen it nearer than most people, and I should be sorry to commit myself to any prophecy. The ridge from its northern shoulder to the top is, it is true, not steep, resembling seen from a distance that from the Aiguille du Gouter to the Dôme on Mont Blanc, but we know nothing of the middle part of the mountain, which in the Himalaya is apt to be the worst.

Last, as to nomenclature. I adhere firmly to the general principle that it is a mistake to affix personal names to great mountains. We should all have been sorry if Mont Blanc had been called Mont Paccard or Mont Saussure after its early climbers ; and when the individual has no claim to connection with the peak the case is stronger. But I do not propose to reopen to-night an old controversy in this particular instance of Mount Everest. For I recognize there comes a time when the inconvenience of any change may more than counter-balance other considerations.

The PRESIDENT : We have heard of Captain Longstaff's wonderful climb. If he could give us the advantage of his experience we should be very grateful.

Captain LONGSTAFF : It has been naturally a great delight to me to listen to this paper of General Bruce's ; it reminds me of a most happy six months with himself and Arnold Mumm, who was then Secretary of the Alpine Club, when we went to console ourselves with Trisul to celebrate the jubilee of the Alpine Club in 1907. We had hoped to go to Everest, but the lack of sympathy with geography of the Secretary of State for India prevented it. I am sure that every climber of experience agrees with General Bruce's thesis. There are many things one would like as a climber to say on these most interesting subjects, but there is not time, and there are others who have greater experience than I have. There are also many questions of great geographical interest involved. General Bruce objects to my slapdash methods of mountaineering. I will remind him of the crossing of the Bagini Pass in 1907, which I think bears a very fair comparison with the sort of thing he accuses me of. He will remember all about it. Of course, seriously, General Bruce is perfectly right. There can be no question but that with a mountain like Everest you must adopt Polar methods. The dashing at the first thing you see is a very pleasant pastime for youth, but it is not the way to get up any very high mountain. We must adopt these Polar methods. We must divide our work into at least two years ; we must find out whether there is what we call an easy route up Everest. If there is no easy route we shall not get up it ! Therefore it is most important—I wish, Mr. President, to make this point strongly—that in the first year, when the reconnaissance party is to go out, this party should include as many experienced climbers as possible, not with a view to climbing the mountain, but with a view to finding the route ; without mentioning names, there are two members of the Alpine Club who are both officers of the Royal Engineers, both members of the Survey of India, both of the right age, who have both extremely good experience—varied experience of mountain work—and I think it would be a thousand pities, considering that you have two men like this in India, if they were not permitted to accompany the expedition, because we want trained topographers with mountain knowledge to tell us mountaineers at home whether a route is possible or not. Without there being any idea of these particular men doing the climb we must have as many trained topographers with mountaineering knowledge in the first year to give us some idea of what the mountain is like. Having done that, I agree with General

Bruce. We must have a gang of trained coolies. The best men I ever had were Bhotias from the north-west corner of Nepal; and in Tibet on Gurla Mandhata they did splendidly. I do not think it is necessary to give high wages, but you must feed them well, and sleep them well, and blanket them well, and shoe them well, otherwise you cannot expect to get anything done. When you have found your route and got your porters together, then I think you must make a base camp as low as you can on Everest, say about 16,000 feet. Then with your team or teams of porters you have got to turn to Polar methods and lay camps ready for the actual climbers—say a camp between 21,000 and 22,000 feet for the climbers; the coolies that make that camp may take two, three, four days, or longer, but the actual climbers will have to climb from 16,000 to 22,000 in a day, and the next day from 22,000 to 26,000 in a day. If they cannot do this, they won't get up Everest! I am convinced, and my friend Meade too, I know, who has climbed higher than Trisul with guides and with native porters, will tell you he agrees with me, the longer you stay above 20,000 the weaker you are going to get. We do not believe in acclimatization in that way. Do not stay up—go up as often as you like, and then come down. There is only one cure for mountain sickness, and that is to come down. If they are going to take longer than three days' actual climbing they won't get up Everest! I believe that the reason why the Duke of the Abruzzi went slowly on his final climb was that they spent too many days over 18,000. I can only refer to my own experience. On our ascent of Trisul, on the last day the successful party did 6000 feet in ten hours, 600 feet an hour. They came down 7000 feet in three hours. It is perfectly easy to come down—anybody can come downhill. Graham made the same progress on the ascent of Kabru. There is no reason, I believe, why climbers who have the necessary physiological attributes, not necessarily mere physical strength, if they are carrying no weight, if they have not to carry their food and tents on their backs, should be unable to climb at the rate of about 500 feet an hour. If they are not going to be able to climb at that pace they won't last out the cumulative trials of low pressure. But even in this case, the geographical results alone would be a full and sufficient reward for this most necessary venture.

The PRESIDENT: Colonel Wood was sent to decide whether there was any higher mountain than Everest at the back of the Himalaya. He found there was no higher mountain. He has seen Everest, I think, nearer than any one else, and we should like his account of what it looks like from the northern side.

Colonel H. WOOD: I was fortunate enough to be sent up in 1903 to investigate the nomenclature of Everest, and I was able to see the mountain for a short time then, and again with Colonel Younghusband, unofficially, I went, along with Ryder and Rawling, up the Brahmaputra, when we saw it from the north. It is fifteen years ago, and my memory of it is rather faint, but it certainly is a most stupendous undertaking to attempt to climb it. The gorges are very great, and I do not think there will be anything very easy in the route there, and therefore the reconnaissance is most necessary. Of course the geographical side is more interesting to me than the other, although I wish I was younger and able to attempt the climb myself. I am sure the Survey of India will give any assistance wanted. I hope, also, the Survey will be considered in the climbing, and one of our younger members will be allowed to go up. Prof. Norman Collie says it should be an English party, but I think a Survey of India one, as it is named after our original Surveyor-General. I

have been asked to say what I remember of the mountain from the northern side. It was generally rather cloudy, and there was a great deal of mist about, but there is no doubt it stands up a most enormous peak. It is, I think, on a spur about 20 miles to the north of the main range. You see it with all the big Himalayan peaks as a background, and it stands out by itself—an absolute giant.

Mr. C. F. MEADE : I am afraid I can claim only a very limited experience. I know only the district which Capt. Longstaff was first referring to. I agree very heartily with what he says, and especially about the speed of coming down. I may say that the thought of the rapidity with which, if necessary, one can come down again, is a perpetual comfort and inspiration. One has that great advantage over Polar expeditions in being able to come down again. I am afraid I cannot claim to have reached any much greater height than my camp on Kamet. We succeeded in camping at 23,500 feet, but the sequel is not very brilliant. We passed the night there and were ready to start the next morning, but the previous day we had had about 100 steps to cut in very hard ice, and I think no one who encounters much step-cutting at great heights has a fair chance of doing much. Another thing I have always found in June is that the snow has always been in a powdery condition, and this is extremely exhausting, and in my opinion likely to be prohibitive. I notice that Dr. Kellas and Capt. Morshead, who have just made their recent attack on Kamet, have reached the same saddle, though their coolies could not get the camp up to it. They had decent weather and did not find the snow bad. This may be due to the effect of the season, September, and I think September instead of June may be a more favourable month.

The PRESIDENT : The time is getting on and I must bring this interesting discussion to a close, but I should like, if I may be permitted, to make a few observations. General Bruce said that I told him we could see Mount Everest from Kampa Dzong during the months of July, August, and September. I remember perfectly well seeing Everest at a distance of 100 miles, and to my remembrance I could see it nearly every day, and I asked Sir Henry Hayden of the Geological Survey, who was there in September, and his recollection is the same. Nearly every day, certainly at the time we were there, Everest could be seen. That means to say that the monsoon did not fall upon Everest as it does upon Kangchenjunga and upon other Himalayan peaks. The fact is, as Col. Wood has said, Everest stands well back from the general line of the great peaks, and it has in front of it (and this is a very important point) two peaks of 23,000 and 24,000 feet which serve as a buffer in between it and the full brunt of the monsoon. That is rather a favourable point, for it means that it may be possible to climb Everest in the hottest months of the year, July and August. I want to say, and to say it with emphasis, that I concur with General Bruce that a very great deal can be made of these Himalayan people if they are properly treated. He referred to the Baltis and mentioned especially the village of Askoli. It so happened that the guide who showed me over the Mustagh Pass was a Balti and was from this very village. I engaged him in Chinese Turkestan, where he had lived for twenty-five years. He certainly was not pressed into the service, but came entirely of his own accord. When we came to a very nasty part where he might quite well have given up, he said "No," he had undertaken to show me over, and would not go back until he had carried out his undertaking. The Duke of the Abruzzi's experience was precisely the same as General Bruce's and mine, that an immense amount can be got out of Himalayan people if they are treated well, given a thorough interest

in the expedition, and, as Captain Longstaff has said, clothed well and shod well. If these matters are looked after, I am certain amongst these Himalayan people there can be got together a party of well-trained men who will form a carrying party for the expedition. As regards survey. One would very much hope that a member of the Survey of India should be the first to climb Mount Everest. There is no reason why that hope should not be combined with the President of the Alpine Club's suggestion that the climber of Everest should be a member of the Club. As Captain Longstaff has said, there are two very fine Alpine Club climbers already in the Survey of India, and the more members of the Survey of India who join the Alpine Club the better. Lastly, I should like to corroborate all General Bruce has said as to the Duke of the Abruzzi's expedition having been a model one. We could not do better than model our own expedition for Everest upon the model of the Duke of the Abruzzi's K₂ expedition. Now I will ask you to join with me in giving a very hearty vote of thanks to General Bruce for his valuable paper. General Bruce is one of those men who have explored most in the Himalayas, and all his observations upon the treatment of the people are of special value because he belongs to a Gurkha regiment, and no man knows how to handle people of the Himalayas better than he does. It is known probably to most of you that in the Gallipoli campaign his presence alone was considered worth a whole Brigade.

TOPOGRAPHY OF THE GOLD RANGE AND NORTHERN SELKIRKS, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Howard Palmer

ALTHOUGH the valley of the Columbia River north of Revelstoke, British Columbia, has been a route of travel for a century, and fifty years ago it was the scene of a full-fledged "gold rush," there is available no adequate account of its physical features. Bordered on the east by the outlying foothills of the Selkirks and on the west by the Gold Range, both of which occupied practically unmapped territory, it promised to well repay geographical investigation. The present paper aims to report briefly the results of a month's reconnaissance of the region made by the late Major Robert H. Chapman and the writer.

From Revelstoke on the Canadian Pacific Railway there extends northerly along the river for 117 miles "The Big Bend Trail." This is maintained by the Government for fire patrol purposes, and affords practically the only land communication with the district embraced within the great northerly loop of the Columbia. A ferry near the tip of the Bend enables connection to be made with another section of the Government trail that strikes the railway again at Donald. We were told that branch trails gave access to some of the lateral valleys, and by these we planned to penetrate into the Selkirks and make a plane-table survey of as much of the new ground as we could. We expected to extend the author's earlier surveys of the lofty Mount Sir Sandford district westerly